The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR JENONNE WALKER

Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing

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Q: See how it goes. Okay, this is an oral history interview with Jenonne Walker. It's the 26th of May, 2004. My name is Raymond Ewing. This interview is being conducted under the Foreign Affairs Oral History program sponsored by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Jenonne, it's good to have this conversation. I look forward to talking to you.

WALKER: So do I.

Q: I think the place to begin is wherever you began in terms of your involvement, your interest in Foreign Affairs. I guess I'd be curious as to where you grew up, what kind of schooling you had and when you came to Washington, assuming that's when you got started in foreign relations.

WALKER: I'm a working class kid from a hick town in Oklahoma, and in that day, I finished high school in 1952, it was quite easy to work one's way through the University of Oklahoma. Nobody in my family had ever gone to the university or to college. University of Oklahoma was almost scary at that time for us. It was easy in part because the academic standards there were not terribly high, which I didn't realize at the time. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven to be in a place like that. There wasn't any career counseling for boys much less girls in that day and none of the women I knew including myself thought in terms of a career. We were all going to be wives and mothers. The few of us who didn't marry right after college or during it got the most interesting job we could find to support ourselves until we settled down. None of my close friends, I don't think anyone I knew, really thought in terms of a career. I wanted to go to school in Paris for the academic, intellectual/academic reasons an all-American girl in the '50s wanted to dance with Gene Kelly. It's nothing more serious than that. I applied for a scholarship, which I didn't get. So I went to San Francisco, worked for a semester and saved some money and went second term and I guess many people's lives are a series of accidents because mine certainly is. I was going to come back to the States, got a place at Columbia University to do further graduate work in European literature and philosophy. I had a masters in philosophy from University of Oklahoma. What you do with a master's in philosophy is further graduate work. I met an English man while going to Paris. We got engaged. Instead of coming back to the States I went to London and got a job. He and I promptly got unengaged but by that time I had fallen in love with London and stayed there five years, with the kind of job that didn't interfere with my social life, which is what mattered to me at the time. I was hired as a secretary by the Naval attachï¿½'s office.

Q: At the embassy.

WALKER: At the embassy. I couldn't really do typing and shorthand, but I became the visitors' bureau, party planner, that sort of thing. There was a little bit of a clerical work as well. The only reason I left London was it got to be my late twenties, and I was an old maid by that time in 1950s, early '60s and I thought, you know I'm not getting married as soon as I thought I was going to. I'd better get more serious about a job. So I came back to the States to go job hunting. My major professor at the University of Oklahoma a man under whom I had done my master's thesis in philosophy turned out to be a spotter for the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and suggested that to me. Good God no, I thought, because all I knew about the CIA was the Bay of Pigs and the U2. He said, "No, no. They have this whole other organization that does analytical work. I think you'd like it." I didn't think so. So I went to New York and got a job at NBC television news as a researcher with a unit doing documentaries and kept getting letters from the CIA, which I didn't answer and the documentary unit was going to fold about the time I got another letter from the agency saying you're not answering our mail. If we don't hear from you by a date certain, we'll never bother you again. I thought well, I'll try it for about six months. So I drifted down to Washington and was undercover during the training program for six months but I always intended to join the analytical side. I spent a dozen, I'd say a dozen years at the agency, ten of those as an analyst of West European affairs mostly in the office of National Estimates. It was a terrific education in how to think and write about how people in other countries saw foreign policy issues, but the time came when I wanted to say, "therefore, American foreign policy should be". Which the CIA of course should not do. It sometimes does and shouldn't do. So much of life is a matter of accidents. Most of my accidents were very lucky. When the Office of National Estimates was abolished at the beginning of the second Nixon term, I became the assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence, Bill Colby. Because he was from the spy side he wanted somebody from the analytical side primarily to advise hion major analytical papers. But at any rate because of my role with him, I was offered a chance to go to the State Department on a two-year loan to the Policy Planning Staff then run by Winston Lord in the Henry Kissinger days, which was a terrific opportunity, and I was inherited by Tony Lake when he took over the Policy Planning Staff after Carter's election and Vance became Secretary of State. My two-year loan was not over and it was Tony who put me on the State Department payroll rather than going back to CIA. My biggest regret is not having taken the foreign service exam when I was young. But even if I had thought I was going to have a career, I would not have done that because the Foreign Service were people from Harvard and Yale, Princeton, not working class kids from the University of Oklahoma. It was only after I got into it that I realized that I was not a lot worse than other people in the Service.

So I got into the State Department as a civil servant and then as a charter member of the Senior Executive Service. One of my unlucky breaks wal can't say not taking the foreign service exam was an unlucky break that was my own wrong decision. But one of my unlucky breaks was to come in on the State Department payroll just as they abolished the Foreign Service Reserve because they had planned the foreign service reform. So I was not able to enter the Foreign Service on the class action suit which brought in Reg Bartholomew and Mike Armacost and a good number of others who were Foreign Service Reserve. So for the rest of my time in the state department I was limited in what I could do because I was Civil Service rather than Foreign Service, and again I had very lucky breaks. I had terrific jobs, but I was limited in the jobs that I could have. I couldn't bid on jobs, and I couldn't work as I had wanted to in the European Bureau. I could work in Policy Planning Staff. At the end of the Carter years it was arranged that I would have what was then called an excursion tour in the Foreign Service. Initially I was going to be the political counsel of Mexico, with no background in Latin American affairs.

Q: Scratch.

WALKER: I spent eleven weeks studying Spanish and they changed my assignment to Stockholm. I wanted to sit on the living room floor and weep at the thought of starting all over another language of which I had no experience. That, perverse as it may sound, was another lucky break because Mexico, I'm sure it's a higher status embassy and is probably a class one embassy and objectively it would've been a higher status job, but Stockholm suited me better. It kept me in the West European district, which is what I wanted to do. I had a terrific two years there. Two years was enough because after that I was repeating myself.

Q: You were a political counselor in Stockholm.

WALKER: Stockholm. It was interesting to see European affairs and U.S.-European relations from that geographic standpoint. The world looks very different up north. Even the maps have a different center of gravity. It was very interesting, but we had some serious issues with the Swedes that made the working life fun and I made lots of Swedish friends, but the job did not offer that much challenge. Sweden is an established Western democracy with whom we had reasonably good relations by that time. So at the end of two years I came back to Washington. Before I went to Stockholm I should say, I ran into the first of my roadblocks about not being a foreign service officer. In 1980, '79, '80 George Vest who was the Assistant Secretary for Europe and Al Hartman who was the Ambassador in Paris wanted me to replace Warren Zimmerman as political counselor in Paris, and they rejected several foreign service nominees and George kept telling me I was just better qualified, much better qualified. They really went out on a limb rejecting various Foreign Service members for the job.

Q: This was after you'd been in Stockholm.

WALKER: No, before. Before. It would've been instead of Stockholm. I got ahead of myself talking about Stockholm. I was approved through the director of personnel and then Harry Barnes who was then Director General of Foreign Service said he wasn't going to let - in fact I was signed up to start French training. I had some French, but I needed a refresher course. I had a three-three plus in French, but that wasn't good enough when working in a language. So I was signed up to start studying French, and Harry Barnes said he wasn't going to let me have one of the best jobs in the foreign service. Vest's department kept fighting that and holding out for me. The substantive people were absolutely terrific. I had trouble with the bureaucracy, but not with the substantial people in the European Bureau. But it was when foreign service reform legislation was on Capitol Hill and AFSA got wind of it and started threatening to oppose the legislation. It just became too difficult. So I lost that job. It was the first time I felt discriminated against because I was not an FSO. The state department is not an equal opportunity employer between its FSOs and its civil service. So I could've joined the Foreign Service only by taking a reduction to mid-career status, and I really considered doing that, and after Paris fell apart the director of personnel tried to - Ron Palmer - tried to persuade me to do that and offered me the job of Pol/Mil officer in Ankara. I thought very seriously about that. I was vain and cared about status and rank, but I always cared a lot more about the job to be done. And had I been assured I would have an equally interesting job, I'd have taken the reduction in grade with the hope that I could work my way back up on the service ladder. John Kelly who was the principal deputy in the European bureau advised me not to do it. He said, "Frankly don't trust these people. You'll spend a year or two studying Turkish. They'll break the assignment. You could be stuck for a very long time in less interesting jobs." So I went to Stockholm instead. Stockholm was wonderful, but it wasn't Paris. I came back from Stockholm and encountered the second problem in not being a Foreign Service Officer. Rick Burt was by then the Assistant Secretary for European affairs and wanted to put me in the Policy Planning job for a year before a particular Office Director's job opened up. And Joan Clark who, was then director general, said yes to the Policy Planning job no to a non-FSO's having an Office Director's job. I understand Joan's rationale because it would be harder to get rid of a civil servant because civil servants can't bid on jobs after two or three or four years. So I had rough time there for several weeks. It seemed like a long time, but I don't think it actually was. I was parked in INR but it really didn't have a job for me. Frankly I was killing time. A real INR job might have been fine, but frankly if I'd wanted to stay as an analyst I probably would've stayed at the CIA. But at any rate Arnie Raphael was then the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military affairs. He had been on Vance's Policy Planning staff when I was there, and he offered me a place in the Political-Military bureau, although that was not my particular area of expertise. Arnie hired me first without really thinking through what I was going to do. I was called Senior Advisor to the Secretary, which meant doing odd jobs and some of them were very interesting. I learned a lot. But as you know if you're not in the line, some of the office directors used me and others didn't. So that was an awful situation. But it lasted for about a year. Then I became Office Director for the Office that did European and United Nations arms control.

Q: That was in the Political Military Bureau.

WALKER: That was the Political Military Bureau. That was another extraordinary lucky break. I would have never chosen to go to the Political Military Bureau. I'd rather have been on the European Bureau. But it couldn't have worked out better in the end because about the time I became an Office Director Gorbachev took over in the Soviet Union. Arms control which had been stagnant for yea, especially European arms controsomeone called following the conventional forces like watching paint russuddenly the negotiations took on life and it was clear that President Reagan and Gorbachev both were committed to pressing ahead to very serious agreement. At that time the State Department, which meant the Political Military Bureau, chaired the interagency committees that made American policy on arms control issues. I chaired those on Security and Confidence Building Measures and then on the negotiations to eliminate intermediate range nuclear weapons and then the negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact to reduce and limit conventional forces in Europe. Three absolutely fascinating negotiations, and they were three-tiered negotiations of course. First, among the agencies in Washington, the interagency group that I chaired. In many ways that was the most difficult because Richard Perle and Secretary Weinberger at the Defense Department opposed all arms control treaties. Richard was very honest about it. He said that even if the United States could dictate every comma of any arms control treaty we still shouldn't sign it because detente euphoria would break out in the West and parliaments and our Congress would reduce defense spending, and the Soviets would somehow cheat and zap us. Before Gorbachev took office Perle was first opposed going to a nuclear negotiation at all. Then he proposed an American position so sweeping thait could never be agreed. And along came Gorbachev who started accepting our non-negotiable proposals. As I thought Perle may have seen his job as saving America from Ronald Reagan, and I saw my job as preventing him from keeping the President's proposals from being accepted. That was one area of negotiation. The second area of course was with our allies. Proposals were presented as American ones to the Soviets. But we had to agree especially with the basing countries, the countries that hosted our missiles on every step of our proposal. So that was the second arena of negotiations. Then of course backstopping our delegation that was doing the negotiation with the Soviets, chairing the Interagency Committee that sent instructions every night and discussed issues with the delegation on the phone several times a day. Absolutely fascinating. When I started this, I knew less about arms control than every other member of the committee I was chairing. I knew just enough to keep my mouth shut and learn it first, but I was learning every day. While State and Defense were at daggers drawn the Joint Chiefs of Staff were problem solvers. They made very clear what they could and couldn't accept, but then they were there trying to make the President's policy work. But in my committees except for the one on chemical weapon arms control the atmosphere was cooperative. People at my level were trying to help each other and think of ways without sacrificing what their agency needed, thinking of ways to address other agencies concerns. And at my level we were able to resolve some CFE and INF issueas many as 98 percent of the issues. That of course is misleading because it's the remaining two percent that really matter.

Q: The hardest.

WALKER: The hardest. But still we were able to do a lot of good work at my level.

Q: You mentioned chemical weapons, negotiations as an exception. What was the situation there?

WALKER: Heavy tension in the room, which was there before I took over the chairmanship of that interagency committee. I worked very hard but not very successfully to eliminate it. It was due to deep aversion in most agencies to having any treaty. There was one provision in the American proposal that all agencies intended be a treaty blocker, but certainly both the JCS and the OSD, which required anywhere, any time onsite inspection. Theoretically the Soviets could've said that some file in the CII don't think such a file existbut let's pretend, a file in the CIA that had the names of all our undercover agents in the Soviet Union was hiding chemical substances and they had to be able to plow through it. Gorbachev, I don't think in the end would've accepted it, but the Soviets were giving the impression they would. The tension was very, very high on that one, and after I left that job Article Ten was dropped from the Chemical Weapons Treaty. A lot of it was personality. I spent a lot of time on all these issues, not just in a meeting room but also outside listening hard to the OSD and other representatives, making sure I understood why they thought what they thought. They knew I understood why they thought what they thought, and was doing as much as I could to accommodate their needs. I think they trusted me to be fair. A time or two on difficult issues that had to go to the White House, the OSD rep at my level would suggest that I write up their option as well as mine. Obviously they read it before they forwarded it, but they trusted me at least to do their first draft.

Q: Understand their position and be able to put it down.

WALKER: Understand it and to represent it fairly. A+ a meeting with NATO allies when I was at the table and the others were back benchers, the OSD rep passed me a note saying that I did a better job of explaining their position than he could have. I really took a lot of pride in that, but I never got to that position with the OSD chemical weapons people. Partly personalities partly the nature of the issue but it just never worked that well.

Q: You were very much involved in the interagency policy formulation and decision process and involved also with the NATO allies and to what extent were you involved in the actual negotiations on any of these, in any of these areas?

WALKER: Virtually not at all. I was chairing the committee that sent instructions to our delegations, and as the negotiations were ongoing especially toward the ending, there would be treaty drafts overnighted every night that we would have to meet on and say to the delegation's proposals, yes, no, try again. So I was chairing the committee that did that and sent out, toward the end of the INF process we weren't always able to get written instructions out. This is another place that having trust of the other members of the committee is important because our negotiator Mike Glitman would call me when they broke up usually about six o'clock in the morning their time, midnight my time. I could tell him the different views in Washington, and he would trust me to accurately reflect all of them, not just my own. Then sometimes after the fact, after the deal had been cut with the Soviets, we would send written instructions so the delegation would have a paper trail to protect itself. But it was very exciting. The hours were long. It was seven days a week, twelve, fourteen hours a day, but we were going for an outcome we were all excited about. There was a period when I was flying to Brussels once a week to talk to NATO about one or the other of these negotiations. I would get off an overnight plane, go straight into the negotiations, go until midnight, and usually get on the plane back to Washington the next day. Sometimes I'd conclude we'd done all we could that day at NATO and leave early enough to catch the Pan Am 103, Brussels to London to Pan Am 103, get back to Washington without ever going to my bed in Brussels. Once I got home in Washington about two o'clock on a Saturday morning after a NATO meeting on CFE, knowing there would be an interagency meeting on INF Saturday morning at ten or eleven o'clock. My INF action officer called me at seven o'clock in the morning to tell me I was chairing the meeting at eight. He said I sounded like Andy Devine. But as I say we were all excited about what we were doing. It was a terrific accomplishment; all three of those, CSBM, INF and CFE were all really important accomplishments. They would have been more important had the Cold War continued obviously. But the INF negotiations, I think first the INF deployment and then the negotiations to eliminate the missiles played a part, not the major part, but an important part in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev had the biggest part, full credit to him. CFE negotiations were just coming to fruition when the Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed. So I can't claim that they really made a change out there in the real world. They would've done had the Cold War continued. But to be fair, and they came to fruition after I had left that job, they did restrict where Russia based its forces, and therefore how many Russian troops could be in places like Georgia, or the Baltic states. In that sense they did make a contribution.

Q: And still-

WALKER: And still do.

Q: Do. Yes.

WALKER: Those limits had to be renegotiated quite likely after first the Cold War ended and then the Warsaw Pact and then the Soviet Union fell apart. The Russians quite rightly wanted some renegotiation not about how many forces they could keep in the former Soviet Republics who were now independent but on the borders of Russia and that was donnot without difficulty but it was done. But that was after my time.

Q: Tell me again the years you were in this job in political military group.

WALKER: I was in that job from summer of 1985-I was special assistant-

Q: For a year.

WALKER: To the assistant secretary for general purpose stuff. I came back from Stockholm in the summer of '83. So it was later, early '84 that I did that. So sometime in 1985 I took over the political military job, and I left that in February of 1990.

Q: So you were there four plus years.

WALKER: Yes. Five plus.

Q: Five plus.

WALKER: Yes, four plus you're right. About five.

Q: Okay. About five years. What, you've talked about Gorbachev and some of the other changes that occurred on the Soviet side, to what extent do you think the attitude of President Reagan was really a significant factor in-

WALKER: Oh it was huge.

Q: In making these breakthroughs that occurred.

WALKER: Absolutely was huge. It was Gorbachev who agreed to accept what we had initially proposed, what we had known we were going to try to propose that favored the West far more than Russia. But Reagan was also absolutely committed to arms control, and I thinl had no personal contact with the man, certainly no conversationbut I think his Star Wars commitment was consistent with his approach to arms control. When he talked about making nuclear weapons obsolete, realistic or not, he meant it. And he was absolutely committed to getting rid of as many nuclear weapons as we possibly could, but also in the CFE to reducing the number of conventional forces and weapons in Europe. And willing to overrule the Defense Secretary in order to do so.

Q: There were several important summits in this area.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: In the period although the dates I'm a little unclear about, Reykjavik in Iceland and also in Malta. Were you involved in either of those?

WALKER: Only as a bystander at Reykjavik because that was about strategic nuclear forces. I did not do that. Chemical and biological weapons were the two UN issues I dealt with. Other than that just the European issues. Obviously I was fascinated by what I'd heard about Reykjavik, but I wasn't there, and by that time Alan Holmes was the Assistant Secretary for Political/Military affairs, and all I knew about what happened there was what Alan told his senior staff and I probably shouldn't go into that about whether Gorbachev and Reagan really did agree to get rid of all strategic forces, which is the big issue about Reykjavik, but Reagan's commitment for winding them down as much as possible was firm. He and Gorbachev were soul brothers on that.

Q: And the secretary during this period.

WALKER: George Shultz.

Q: Was George Shultz most of the time that you were in the office, maybe the whole time.

WALKER: President Bush and Jim Baker came in January of, late January, end of January '89, and I went at the beginning of February 1990. So I was there for one year with him, and the Bush team was just finding its feet then. These were complicated treaties that hadn't been completed. CFE, the chemical weapons ban and verification protocol for the biological weapons were complicated things. The new Bush people were working their way through to understand what NATO's proposals were and decide if they wanted to reaffirm them. The Bush administration's issue in my area was CFE. Moscow had always wanted to include air forces. The agreement had always been to reduce to a certain percentage below the number of the side that had fewer. We always knew NATO had fewer land forces than the Warsaw Pact. So any agreement there would mean massive Warsaw Pact reductions and tiny NATO reductions. In fact we had some tanks et cetera we planned to just destroy anyway that we were saving to be our contribution to the reduction. For all practical purposes that reduction was going to be totally one-sided. The Soviets believed that NATO had an advantage in aircraft and therefore had always wanted to include aircraft in the negotiation. We kept telling them that wasn't so, and if we agreed to include aircraft when we finally started to do the numbers, they wouldn't like it. Nonetheless George Bush to his great credit, he was off at a CFC summit at some place in the Nordic area, I don't remember where. He and George Shultz who was with him announced as a concession to Moscow that Washington would agree to include aircraft in the negotiations. The last meeting of the negotiating session then underway was the 17th of April. It's funny how some dates stick in your mind. I made the huge mistake of saying, "Ah that's going to be easy. Of course we can commit to putting a NATO proposal on the table before the 17th of April," because the agreement was ten percent below the side that had, the fewer planes. All we have to do, we have intelligence on Warsaw Pact aircraft, and we obviously know what NATO's are so all we do is subtract ten percent from NATO's number, and you've got a figure to put on the table. It was hell. We discovered, first of all how complicated it was to define what you mean by combat and combat support aircraft. Obviously we wanted to capture as many Warsaw Pact planes as possible and as few of NATO's as possible. But also we found that NATO allies including ourselves didn't always know how many we had. Our records weren't as good as they should have been. The very last possible NATO meeting in order to meet our announced commitment of having numbers to put on the table by the 17th of April went on well past midnight and national delegations kept getting calls from home adding a few more. We managed to do it, but it was a lot harder than we thought it would be. So that and also agreeing to include military personnel in the negotiations were the two big moves that Bush made.

Q: After he was president.

WALKER: And before I left.

Q: You mentioned that George Shultz was at the summit with him or was it Jim Baker.

WALKER: That had to be Jim Baker. You're right that had to be Jim Baker. I think if you enjoy multilateral negotiations you have to be a bit warped and I did. It's a zoo but I always did enjoy it. I enjoyed interagency diplomacy, which is maybe even more of a zoo. My previous experience of interagency diplomacy was on President Carter's Policy Planning Staff. I kept responsibility for US-European relations but added to that the human rights account. Carter as you know wanted a big human rights component but nobody in our foreign policy knew how to do it. The deputy secretary of state Warren Christopher was delegated to chair the Interagency Committee making specific decisions about how to use economic assistance or military assistance and sales and other aspects of policy to enforce, to implement a human rights policy. I became the Executive Director of Chris' Interagency Committee, working with various parts of the State Departmenthe economic bureau, the political-military bureau, the regional bureaus, as well as Commerce, Defense, et cetera to balance the human rights agenda with our other economic and security agendas with these countries. Trying to get an agreed decision before Chris's meetings, but when we couldn't do that putting the issue and the different agencies' positions on one piece of paper so Chris wouldn't have a snowstorm of different memos from different agencies for these interagency meetings.

Q: Was the feeling that having you do this from the policy planning staff was more objective, more neutral than say having someone from the new human rights bureau.

WALKER: Absolutely. Initially they had done it, but they were an advocate and that's what they were meant to be and I was the Policy Planning staff which was more neutral. So that was my first official experience in trying to gain the confidence of other parts of the State Department, but also other parts of the government including parts that weren't primarily foreign affairs agencies, like treasury and commerce and get them to support recommendations about how to advance the President's human rights agenda without damaging other important aspects of American foreign policy.

Q: I wonder if you at this point would talk just a little bit more about the role of policy planning and your role in it. Now this human rights function seems like very much an operating-

WALKER: It was.

Q: And coordinating function as opposed to broad policy, thinking.

WALKER: Well, it was an advocate for the human rights aspects of policy, and that's how Pat Derian, the first assistant secretary for human rights saw her role. More than some on her staff thought she should've done when our ambassador from a country which was a serious concern to us for nuclear proliferation and also had human rights problems was back in Washington and Pat told this man our only concern in country X was its human rights policy. Well, that just wasn't so. We had other very important concerns. I'm not sure she was wrong to see her role as an advocate, but one unfortunate consequence was that a lot of people soured on the human rights policy. This was my first experience of working with bureaus other than the European bureau. We didn't have these human rights concerns with West European governments that we did in Latin American governments et cetera. And there were people in those bureaus who had wanted to have a human rights factor in American foreign policy, especially after the Kissinger years, were very open to it. Pat's one note advocacy put a lot of them off the whole idea of human rights component to American foreign policy, which is unfortunate. She alienated people who started out as reasonably supportive, in some cases very supportive.

Q: I remember that period where I think the Carter stress on human rights was welcomed, but somehow when it became the be all end all nothing else could really be discussed, it seemed excessive.

WALKER: Well, actually that was the case in some of Carter's rhetoric, which I found unfortunate. It wasn't the way Chris really ran the human rights policy. He was quite happy to be inconsistent for a good cause. When it was a choice for a start between what would make us look noble and pure on human rights and what would actually improve the human rights situation on the ground he always tried to do the latter. It's not always the case that denying an economic assistance program, for example, is the best way to have positive influence. One of the hardest issues is when a bad human rights actor had begun to improve its act but still has a long way to go and the improvement has been in response to US pressure. What do you do to show improvement pays off without giving the impression that he doesn't need to improve anymore. It's a hard call. Nobody knows for sure what the reaction is going to be. So Chris was very willing to take the heat for was when it was a choice of what was more likely to work and what was more likely to make us look good. But then also have to balance the human rights factor against security, economic, or other components of our foreign policy. So the day to day decisions he made were far more balanced than our rhetoric sometimes suggested.

Q: So you would chair a committee at kind of the working level that would try to reach agreement and if it failed, it would in effect prepare for a decision at the higher level such as the deputy secretary.

WALKER: Yes and often, yes, there was a committee at my level. Sometimes it was me talking to all the other agencies that were involved, but I would prepare a briefing book which told Chris which issues we agreed on and various reasons why but then also what we disagreed on, which agencies felt what and why and what the arguments were.

Q: And you would attend the meetings he would chair. What other, just talking a little bit more about the policy planning period. Were there European issues or U.S. policies that you were very much involved in in that period or was it more kind of more monitoring the European bureau working with them as appropriate.

WALKER: Working with them, and you asked about the state of the Policy Planning Staff. As you know during much of its history it's been a turkey farm. Its role depends entirely on the secretary of state, how he wants to use the staff and his relationship with the Director of Policy Planning. I was just very lucky to be there when Kissinger used it as a substantive cabinet and Vance to a large degree did the same and insofar as we were successful it was working with the regional bureaus. When Win Lord was Kissinger's Policy Planning Director nobody could've been more loyal, but he thought loyalty included honest disagreement, and he was consistently sending memos with cover notes saying this paper disagrees with you and I'm not convinced myself, but it's very well argued that you ought to read it and Kissinger would send it back saying why are you sending such trash, but he would read it.

Q: Think about it.

WALKER: He would think it. Sometimes we would see a glimmer of it in what he did subsequently. Only once over my protest did I send anything to the deputy secretary or the secretary which did not also reflect the line bureau's concerns. Sometimes people in the European bureau would come to me because Kissinger would love to intimidate people and he was successful with a lot. People in the European bureau would occasionally come to me saying we can't get this idea across our front office could you help. So I would put it in a memo, if I agreed with it, I would put it in a memo of mine, which Win was more likely to sent the Secretary. Win hired the best people he could find whether they agreed with Kissinger or not. Tony Lake went out of his way to find people who disagreed with Tony and Vance and Carter, to have in-house critics instead of advocates. The only time I did a memo was to Vance it was to appeal a decision of Chris' that Pat Derian and the human rights bureau supported, and Tony and I thought was bad for other aspects of American policy, and I thought that should've been shown to Pat Derian before going to the Secretary so she'd have a chance to put a paragraph or whatever. That's the only time Tony insisted that I not share a memo with the relevant line bureau.

Q: And it was approved?

WALKER: It was approved.

Q: Okay. Let's see. Why don't, I'd like, I don't want to interrupt your very interesting-

WALKER: Well, I'm chopping back and forth.

Q: Well, we are moving around a little bit. I guess I'd like to hear you talk a little bit more about what you did in Stockholm. You mentioned that your relations were generally good, but we still had some issues you dealt with. I know what a political counselor does. He goes or she goes and talks with the government people and the opposition, but what else did you do while you were there?

WALKER: Well, obviously a lot of public speaking and talking to the press and the press attachï¿½ saw his role as scheduling me. He didn't feel comfortable, and this is an accident, he didn't feel comfortable with the press. The biggest issue we had to work on while I was there was that sometime before I got there a Swedish individual had given sensitive American information to the Soviets. He was jailed and may still be in jail. But because of that we had cut off all sensitive technology transfer to the Swedes, and the Swedes knew they were at fault. They were trying hard to work their way out of the problem by establishing new procedures. The climax came when Defense Secretary Weinberger made a visit to Stockholm. Boy, did the Swedes do a number. They showed him things they hadn't shown the Norwegians, which is really saying a lot. All of their underground anti-aircraft facilities et cetera were pointed eastward. The Swedes get all misty eyed and naive about anybody who calls himself a freedom fighter in the third world, but when it came to the security of their own region they are very hard headed.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE ASTART OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

Q: Okay, you were talking about the Weinberger visit to Stockholm and the Swedish effort to reestablish, I suppose, American confidence that would allow technology transfers.

WALKER: Especially a missile called the AIM-9L, which they wanted for an aircraft they were then developing called Grippen, which is now the chief competitor of the Lockheed and Boeing the supersonic fighters. The Swedes as a neutral country would've never said it publicly, but they formulated their defense policy to complement what they knew we were doing. When Weinberger was there they showed him how they had done that, and without so far as I know or consulting anybody else back in Washington he announced at the conclusion of his visit the ban was lifted.

Q: I'm curious though I guess still about why he came to Sweden. Was that something that the embassy pushed hard to arrange? Did the Swedes go out of their way to invite him?

WALKER: Both. Both. Because we thought the Swedes had come far enough and only by Weinberger's coming himself could the decision be made. Another very big issue, two other issues between us at the time. One was the idea of a Nordic Nuclear Free Zonthat Washington just go hysterical about. There my job was trying to explain the Swedish position to Washington. No Swedish politician could afford to be anti-anything called nuclear free. So the Swedish government especially the people who articulate the policy, endorsed the Nuclear Free Zone but said that obviously it has to include the Nordic part of the Soviet Union, which meant Soviet nuclear armed submarines and ships that were in the Nordic area. It was a way of endorsing a Nordic Nuclear Free Zone while making clear what was the nuclear problem in their part of the world. It took Washington a long time to understand that. The other issue in my job was the difference between Washington and Sweden on Central America. You can remember during the Reagan Administration how much Sweden objected to our Central American policy. Pierre Schori, who was Secretary General of the Social Democratic Party for International Affairs was on the Latin America Troika of the Socialist International and spent a lot of time there. I wasn't going to endorse the Reagan policy myself. I never said to the Swedes I believe the following. I didn't matter. My opinion didn't matter. I'd say it's very important that you understand how Washington sees this, and the Swedes for their part not even the press on the opposition in Parliament ever put me on the spot and said, "Come on Jenonne. Do you agree with that yourself?" Every diplomat has similar experiences. Recently one of my Swedish contacts was ambassador in Washington. He told me the only American ambassador the Swedes had no respect for was one who, wink-wink, nudge-nudge, let them know that he agreed with Stockholm rather than Washington. He shouldn't do it and besides, who the hell cares what we think. An ambassador is here to explain his government's position.

Q: I have to ask you, who was our ambassador at the time.

WALKER: I shouldn't say.

Q: You should say who you worked for.

WALKER: Oh it wasn't my ambassador.

Q: Who did you work for?

WALKER: I worked for a seventy-seven year old Swedish-American businessman called Frank Forsberg who had spend a lot of his time in New York helping Swedes do business in the United States. He had wonderful contacts in Swedish economics and finance. He tried hard to learn the political issues, and at his age which I'm not too far now from myself, just wasn't learning new issues, and he had the good sense to realize it. So he traveled the country with his wife, and they were just great. My job was another one of my lucky breaks. My job was a lot more fun because of that because I handled a lot of the political issues that the Ambassador might have done. The DCM, a political officer himself by background and preference, also resisted the temptation to do the Political Counselor's job.

Q: Well, it sounds like a good team to work with.

WALKER: It was.

Q: Considering it was basically your first foreign service-.

WALKER: Indeed. I think it was absolutely terrific.

Q: You knew the substance of the issues having been involved across Europe from the policy planning staff but probably the details of how to go about working in an embassy was new.

WALKER: Actually my teacher for that was a junior officer in the political section because neither the DCM nor Ambassador Forsberg arrived until I had been there for some time. I had a terrific number two. There were only two of us, two Americans in the section.

Q: Okay, anything else about Stockholm or thinking back to the policy planning period?

WALKER: Not that I know of.

Q: Okay. Anything else about the very interesting position in political-military bureau in the arms control area after Stockholm, well, somewhat after.

WALKER; Well, it was pretty soon after I came back. While I was the Assistant Secretary's so called Senior Advisor, he used me for speech writing, writing congressional testimony. So I learned a lot, that's one thing I've always wanted in jobs, what I could learn in them.

Q: You were the special assistant to the assistant secretary for Political-Military affairs.

WALKER: I was senior advisor.

Q: Who was the?

WALKER: Jack Chain.

Q: Spelled?

WALKER: C-H-A-I-N. He was a serving general who, he was only there for. No. When I first went there it was Jon Howe, an admiral. Then it was Jack Chain, a general and then it was Alan Holmes, a very experienced diplomat.

Q: Wasn't there another admiral in there because I was in Cyprus, very much involved with Beirut in the early '80s. It may have been before-

WALKER: It may have been before me.

Q: Yes, I guess it would've been-

WALKER: Jon Howe.

Q: '82, '83 period.

WALKER: Jon Howe, Jon Howe had been there a while before I had. And then he moved on the NSC staff, and then he was in Bush administration, and the Clinton administration and he managed Somalia at the time of the failed -

Q: All right. Anything else?

WALKER: No, just that going there, to the Political-Military bureau was an unlucky break initially because I would rather have continued working on Europe and I resented the discrimination against civil servants, but it turned out to be a very lucky break because of the issues that came up. When I went there, we thought arms control was on hold indefinitely but it broke open and when I joined the Policy Planning Staff when the human rights issue became prominent. It's always more fun working on the beginning of policy when you're inventing something new.

Q: Okay and as that period came to an end where did you go form there? That would've been about 19.

WALKER: February of 1990. Then I retired the first time, and I retired because I'd done all I could do as a non-FSO. I was not going to be a political appointee and I was not going to be a foreign service candidate for any of the jobs I might want. It just seemed that I'd done what I could do as a non-FSO in the State Department. I left with great regret because I loved my job and so admired the people I worked with. The State Department has its share of drones, but the good people could be making a lot more money and by not making more money in the private sector, and they don't make more money by working nights and weekends. They're there because they really care about the issues. So because of the people I worked with, and the issues I was lucky enough to work on, I left with great regret. Initially I was looking for a year off at a think tank when Tom Hughes who was then the President of Carnegie Endowment said he didn't want people still on the government payroll planning to go back because it would affect what they wrote, but he said, "You know if you were willing to retire and come on the Carnegie payroll, I'd offer you a job." And just, sometimes you know in your gut something's the right thing to do. That's when it sort of came together. Taking a year off wasn't going to make my prospects for a foreign service job that much better and I'd had the best of what I was likely to have. So I had three years, two and a half at Carnegie talking and writing, saying exactly what I wanted about US-European relations without having to clear my views with eighty-seven people. Tom turned out to be right. The freedom of saying exactly what I thought was great and I had no desire to go back into government.

Q: Did you do a book or articles?

WALKER: I did, Tom didn't want Carnegie people to do books, and in those daythe Berlin wall came down in November of '89 and I went to Carnegie in February of '9it was hard to get an op ed piece in print before it was out of date. So Tom wanted us to have more visibility more often articles, which was fine. I did chapters in edited books and I wrote one book of my own commissioned by the Swedish International Peace Research Institute of Stockholm, about the future of conventional arms control after the Cold War, or rather did it have a future, but mostly I did articles and op ed pieces and chapters in edited books. But then, the luckiest break of my career. Tony Lake became Clinton's National Security Advisor and asked me to come be in charge of Europe on the NSC staff. I had worked for Tony in the Carter years. We were friends and he offered me the job. I was good at the job. But so might other people have been that he didn't know about. It was a terrific accident.

Q: Who you know.

WALKER: Who you know and whose line of vision I seemed to be in.

Q: And timing.

WALKER: And timing. I was minding my own business reading the newspaper the first Saturday morning in December when Sandy Berger called me. And I'd written an op-ed piece for the New York Times other things about Bosnia and Sandy said would I be willing to go to Little Rock the next day to talk to the governor. So off I went. Six of us sat around in chairs in the library for three hours talking on ideas about Bosnia. Clinton liked to hear people disagree with each other. He likes to try out ideas and have people disagree with him. I didn't realize that was my audition, but I guess it was. I was on the transition team, which began in the beginning of December.

Q: Transition team at the NSC or-

WALKER: No, at the State Department. I was doing Europe and national security affairs on the transition team writing all the papers that the real peoplthose who take office after the inauguratiomostly ignored, which is usually the fate of transition teams.

Q: When did you begin that?

WALKER: January 20.

Q: Didn't have to be confirmed.

WALKER: No, didn't have to be confirmed. Other people like Tom Niles had been the Assistant Secretary in the European bureau and for some time he was still acting. Of those two top jobs, Assistant Secretary for Europe at the State Department or Senior Director on the NSC staff, I thought I would prefer the State Department job. That sounds terrible. Either of those jobs would be great. There's more negotiating in the EUR job, more negotiating with the European. I did a fair amount of that on the NSC job, but that's really State Department's role. But if you really care about substance rather than management, as I did, being in charge of your area on the NSC staff actually turned out to be the better job. During the first Clinton term at leasthe only one for which I have direct experiencthe NSC staff had a far greater toll in shaping policy. I'd even find myself up in the family quarters Sunday afternoons with the President, feet up on the coffee table, his saying, "What do you think we ought to do about this and that?" It was absolutely extraordinary. The people who worked for me had similar experiences. We had to watch what we said because the NSC staff is less bureaucratic than the other government departments, with fewer review levels. Obviously time permitting others reviewed my work. But one of my quite junior staffers, I can't remember which European president was visiting in the very early days, and while I was in those meetings, something came up. I think one of his colleagues in the State Department called him. This question is going to arisI can't remember what the issue waand we need to figure out what the President should say about it at the press conference that will follow the meeting. So my quite junior staffer typed up something, took it to the press office people and the next thing he knew it was coming out of the President's mouth.

Q: New policy.

WALKER: New policy. You're used to everything you do being reviewed by half the population of Washington going through eighteen levels. This, it can be heady but if you're smart you know when to saeven to the Presiden"I don't know. I'll get back to you."

Q: How big a staff did you have?

WALKER: Very small. One FSO, one general -

Q: General from the military?

WALKER: General from the military paid by them, and two outside hires and myself, and we had all of Europe from Portugal to the former Soviet Union. Nick Burns headed a different staff that covered the former Soviet republics.

Q: Jenonne I wonder if this is maybe a logical point to stop and then we can continue next time to talk about issues that you dealt with on the NSC staff and your assignment in the Czech Republic.

WALKER: Sure. Happy to.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE BSTART OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

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Q: This is a continuation of a foreign affairs oral history interview with Jenonne Walker. It's the 8th of September, 2004. Jenonne, we were talking before, I believe, about your time at the National Security Council dealing with Europe in the early period of the Clinton administration, '93 and '94. I think we talked about how you had basically Western Europe, and someone else was doing Eastern Europe, Russia.

WALKER: No, I had Europe from Portugal to the former Soviet border. So what we used to think of as Western Europe and what we used to think of as Central and Eastern Europe, but not the former Soviet republics.

Q: Maybe we should talk a little bit about what the issues were at the beginning of the Clinton administration and how you and the NSC [National Security Council] were dealing with those. The NSC advisor in that period was Tony Lake and Sandy Berger was the deputy, I believe.

WALKER: Yes. The big issue of course was Bosnia. It consumed ninety-five percent of my time, close to ninety-seven or ninety-eight percent of Tony Lake's and, I suspect, Warren Christopher's time. It was the first post-Cold War administration, first chance to think fresh about U.S. relations with Western Europe in decades, and we were overwhelmed by Bosnia. It was a terrible mess by the time Clinton was inaugurated. There were no good options. During the transition, the first Sunday in December, I was asked to go to Little Rock and talk to the governor about Bosnia, and Governor Clinton, Senator Gore, Warren Christopher, Tony Lake, Jim Steinberg and I for about three hours in the library of the governor's mansion. The first thing I said to the President-elect was there aren't any good options including doing nothing, which I thought was the worst option. That remained the position throughout my time there. The way the Clinton administration organized things, interagency groups were chaired by one of the cabinet departments, usually the State Department, unless the subject either was of equal interest to both defense and state or it was a crisis. Bosnia qualified as both of those. So I chaired the interagency groups on it. Walt Slocuwho was the under-secretary, assistant secretary at the beginning of defense, he later became the under secretary of defensemade himself the action officer on that issue and later on NATO enlargement. And so because he came to working group meetings, other people, other agencies sent people of comparable rank, which meant my interagency group could do as much as one could do beneath the political level. I'm very proud of the spirit of cooperation within that group although there were deep disagreements of course about what to do.

During my time on the NSC staff, it's not just that our policies were terrible. Our way of making them was pretty awful. The Presidenthe most interesting mind I've ever encountered, fascinating man to work with, but a deep reluctance to take hard decisions especially when his advisors disagreed. Like any good intellectual he could see eight sides of every issue. I would be told for instance come in at eight o'clock on a Saturday morning for one hour with the president about Bosnia, not designed to take any decisions, just to play with ideas. We'd still be there at two o'clock in the afternoon. Fascinating for me. But it's not a good use of the president's time. It was very frustrating that we weren't getting clear decisions. He wasn't willing, even the decisions he took, he wasn't willing to insist that all of his cabinet level officers stick to the decisions in public even if they were trying to change his mind in private, which of course is fine.

So it was a very frustrating experience. The Europeans were frustrated with us because they wanted us to sign on to the Vance-Owen peace plan and they would assert to us sometimes, if only we did that, all of the parties in the region, the Serbs, the Bosnians, the Croats would fall into line. We never thought that was so, and for most of my time our position was that we wouldn't endorse any peace plan until the parties had. It was for the parties to make up their own minds. In fact one of the first things that President Clinton did, at our recommendation, was to appoint an observer to the Vance-Owen talks, not a full-fledged participant, and that was Reg Bartholomew. The Europeans don't like to remember that Reg Bartholomew delivered the Bosnian signature on the Vance-Owen plan, but it was the Serbs who rejected it.

I always thought that only serious military force would make the Serbs stop shelling Bosnian civilian centers. They would stand out of range of the Bosnian army because the Serbs had long-range arms and the Bosnian military did not and shell civilian centers. Finally after I left government, we shifted to a position of endorsing a particular peace plan with the Europeans and saying that, if one side accepted it and the other side did not, military pressure would be brought to bear. So finally because of that and a combination of other reasons after I had left Washington, NATO started using military force against the Serbs who were attacking Bosnian civilians, and it worked. Other things were at play at the same time, but that was an important factor.

So while we didn't have the opportunity that many of us including me would've liked to step back and think about where do we go with U.S.-European relations, what's NATO for now that the Soviet threat has disappeared, in fact we were, I guess lawyers would call it making case law by responding late, reactively, to the Bosnian crisis. We were working out some of the things NATO could be used for. The American role in Europe. What are the real threats to European security after the Cold War? Some of these things we were doing on the run although not in a way anyone would recommend. Tragically late and reactive, but by the end of the day with a lot of bad feeling between the United States and Europe, we did come to a position which worked in Bosnia after I was in Prague using NATO military force on Europe's new security problems, worked in Kosovo and with some US-European understanding although not full. It's continued to be developed with Afghanistan et cetera about the uses of NATO in a post-Cold War world.

Q: You mentioned that you thought and of course others thought that only military pressure could've really broken the log jam and brought, focused people's minds the parties and so on. I guess the outside perception is that after the experience of Somalia and some other things and very cautious attitudes at the Pentagon and the Defense department, that's the reason we didn't go in that direction. But was it more complex than that?

WALKER: It's more complex than that. But that's an important part of it. That's a very important part of it. Somalia exacerbated feelings that were already present in the administration. Everyone my age has one or more Vietnam traumas, and one that Tony Lake shared with Colin Powell is "no entry without a clear exit". You remember one, the first major proposal of the Clinton administration was to lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian government and use NATO air strikes only so long as it took the Bosnian government to acquire and learn to use heavy arms. The theory was that we would level the playing field and having done that, the Bosnians would be on their own to defend themselves. I thought that was an illusion, that having armed the Bosnians we would be seen, rightly in my opinion, to have entered the war on their side. Then we couldn't walk away if they were being rolled by the Serbs. Nonetheless that attitude prevailed for a long time. When we finally did start using serious NATO air power, there was no clear exit point, but for a long that was part of it and the fact that Colin Powell would have criticized the President. He was then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President's lack of military service, the draft dodger charge, was a factor on all our minds. So it was more complicated than that, but that was a big part of it. I don't know if we would have behaved any differently if Somalia had not happened. What it did was reinforce attitudes that were already in the administration. Tony always wanted to use serious force against the Serbs. From time to time Warren Christopher did, but then he changed his mind. Colin Powell never did. When Shalikashvili became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he was much more inclined to be forceful about it. But he had a problem in his own ranks. Les Aspin, again like any good intellectual, could see eight sides of the issue. He was very honest in saying when asked, "What should we do?" "I just don't know." So Tony never had a consistent ally in any of them, any of the cabinet departments. Madeleine Albright agreed with him. She was our Ambassador to the UN, but she didn't speak for a cabinet department. So Tony always was determined to work us toward a more forceful policy. I had given up by the time I went to Prague. Tony bless him, never gave up. He'd get discouraged for a day or two, but he never really gave up on that.

Q: The other issue where you mentioned that maybe we should just touch on here is NATO enlargement.

WALKER: NATO enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe. Warren Christopher went to a NATO ministerial in June of 1993 in Athens, and while there he, his advisors came up with the idea of calling for a NATO summit at the end of '93, beginning of '94. He called President Clinton who said, "Okay." So they proposed it to the ministerial meeting and it was approved. This concentrates a man's mind almost as much as the prospect of having. The transatlantic relationship was in terrible shape because of Bosnia anyway. We thought, I thought and everybody else agreed as soon as I said it, that we simply couldn't go to a summit without some concrete results. Not just words about how much we all loved NATO and loved the transatlantic relationship, but really concrete results. As soon as I got back to Washington, I organized an interagency group on NATO. It wasn't a crisis, but it was equally important to the State Department to the Defense Department. So I chaired that Interagency Group. Organized a group in August, June, July or August as soon as we got back from the NATO summit. Our aim was to use the time when the Europeans were on summer vacation and have concrete proposals as soon as they came back in September. At the very first meeting I put on the table the substance of what became the Partnership for Peace, not the title. I'm not any good at jazzy titles or headlines. Here's one place where Somalia did matter. Our working title, and I don't remember who came up with it, was Peacekeeping Partnership. After Somalia the word peacekeeping couldn't be used. So we didn't really have a title for a long time until Chas Freeman from the Defense Department came up with Partnership for Peace. That, the world believes that that was devised as a sort of second best to NATO expansion. That's not really true. The Partnership was agreed. I don't think the principals had a formal meeting to bless it, but it was agreed, it was not real problem, very early on, and then we addressed the issue of what to do about NATO enlargement if anything. That was very controversial. Some people, I don't think anybody was arguing for immediate enlargement including the Central and East European countries who knew they were not ready. But many of them, the Poles, the Czechs and the Hungarians primarily who were the closest to being ready wanted candidate status or something, some tip of the hat to say they had a preferred relationship and they were on the road to NATO membership. We weren't prepared to do that. In retrospect it's a very good thing we did not because had we done so Slovakia would've made the list, and by the time the first NATO enlargement came along Slovakia had real problems with democracy, with basic criteria for NATO membership. Now it's doing very well, but it wasn't then. So at any rate the decision was made to put down criteria. We worked out those criteria in my interagency group. They were first and foremost solid democracy and a functioning market economy. Military capabilities came lower on our criteria list.

Q: Civilian control of the military.

WALKER: Oh that's next part of a solid democracy. Yes. Civilian control of the military. Free press, free speech, all the attributes of what one would think of as a Western democracy. And the military contribution was important, but we quite consciously put that at the end of the list. There were various arguments against NATO enlargement as you know. Some were worried about the reaction Moscow and rightly so. I saw strong arguments on both sides. I was worried that by definition-I certainly endorsed our criteria. I thought anthink they were absolutely the right ones, but the countries that met the criteria would be the ones who least needed the boost of NATO membership because democracy and market economy were better established. It would be seen as a poke in the eye to the good guys in countries like Romania and Bulgaria who were struggling but not quite there. In fact that didn't happen. They saw it as encouragement to try harder. The other issue for the NATO summit was about European ambitions to have a security and defense thing of their own. At the time they were talking about through the Western European union, and it's evolved now. It's now through the European Union. And I remember the first session we had with senior Frenchmen who had flown over about it. The Political Director of the French foreign ministry at the time opened the meeting by carrying on at great length about how important it was for the communiquï¿½ to endorse European security defense cooperation. I thought he'd never draw a breath so I could say, yes, we agree. But this summit is not just about a communiquï¿½. We have to have something really concrete. It was our proposal that if the Europeans, however they wanted to organize themselves, WEU (Western European Union) or EU (European Union) wanted to do something that NATO did not want to do, they could borrow NATO equipment if it was useful to them. The French, not having been part of a NATO's integrated military command, had trouble understanding what we meant. They said, "You mean we need NATO approval to use French forces." We said, "No, no, no. Forces don't belong to NATO. Forces belong to member governments." We were talking about things like AWACs (Airborne Warning and Control System), the very few things that NATO does own in common. After several very difficult sessions, the same Frenchman looked across the table at me and said, "You know it's taken us a while. But we now understand what you're talking about and we see how this can be useful to France and useful to the European unity and we want to make it work. We have problems at home." Mitterrand then the French President, must not be vulnerable to charges by the opposition that this is back door reintegration into NATO military command. Because part of the proposal was that we would form combined joint task forces, which would be headquarters teams, that would be trained and equipped to operate beyond NATO territory. The French wanted to participate in those teams because these they could be used by NATO, or they could be borrowed by the West Europeans themselves to do something outside NATO command under their own command. The French liked that idea but didn't want it to seem to be backdoor integration into NATO's military command. So it was long and complicated. It was very successful. Later when President Clinton made his second trip to Europe for the D-Day trip in June of 1994 after Anzio, Southampton, Normandy, he made a speech to the French National Assembly. That night at President Mitterrand's state dinner important French men were forcing their way across the room to grab a member of President Clinton's party and say, "We finally have an American President who not just in rhetoric but really understands and endorses European Unity." One of the biggest supporters of this was Shalikashvili who was then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He understood, as Colin Powell had before him, that there were likely to be places where some kind of Western military force would be important, and we wanted a Europe that could do that. We wanted consultation. We hoped for agreement, but it was in America's interest to have a West European thing that could do things we didn't want to participate in.

Q: When was the NATO summit then?

WALKER: The NATO summit was January of 1994.

Q: Okay. And to go back to the Partnership for Peace for a minute. That essentially was open to all-

WALKER: Yes, it was. Just about the only disagreement in Washington about it was again Chas Freeman wanted countries to have to apply for it, and all the rest of us thought that was a bad idea. And when it got to a Principal's Committee meeting, even the Secretary of Defense didn't support it.

Q: So the countries were all eligible, entitled, they could do various things within that framework.

WALKER: Each would have a partnership agreement depending on its ability. But the idea was, this obviously had political utility because part of their partnership agreement was the state of play in terms of the defense budget, procedures for civilian control of the military et cetera et cetera. But also it brought as many as wanted to join into training and exercising with NATO forces, which made it easier to put together coalitions of the willing when the occasions arose, as it did first in Bosnia and then in Kosovo.

Q: Were you, did you represent the United States at the planning sessions for the NATO summit?

WALKER: Yes.

Q: How did that, that was done at NATO or-

WALKER: No, well, no. Obviously there were discussions of it at NATO, but primarily it was bilaterals with the French, the British, the Germans. We would go to their capitals. They would come to ours. There were times we went to NATO both on Bosnia and on the NATO summit issues, but primarily it was done in bilaterals.

Q: With the major allies, at least in preparation for broader sessions that also took place.

WALKER: Right. On Central and Eastern Europe, again the Bush administration put in place some very sensible policies.

Q: The first Bush administration.

WALKER: The first Bush administration, toward the former Soviet satellites. They were several years down the road by the time Clinton was inaugurated, and things were changing very quickly in that part of the world. And so from the very beginning of the Clinton administration, I'd been trying to get serious attention to looking again at Bush I policies, how they were working. Were they still the best ones? Could we think of anything else to do? And that kept getting to the bottom of everybody's in-box because everyone was obsessed with Bosnia. But again Clinton was supposed to go from the NATO Summit to Moscow for his first meeting in Moscow with Boris Yeltsin. I said he really mustn't go straight from NATO to Moscow flying over the struggling new democracies in between. Everybody agreed. So it was agreed that he would stop in Prague and invite the presidents and prime ministers of the four North Central European countries, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic. There again a Presidential meeting concentrates the mind wonderfully. You had to have something concrete, and so we came up with a series of initiatives, no one of which was terribly exciting and groundbreaking, but they did add up to a more intense engagement. It certainly wasn't a rejection of what the first Bush administration had done, but it was an adjustment to the fact the time had passed in the new situation. We knew that North Central Europeans were getting very unhappy that they didn't get more by way of NATO membership, a date or associate status or something like candidate status. But they, we didn't expect to obviate their unhappiness with that and we didn't. But they did say they were very pleased because they saw a deeper engagement in their domestic affairs that they welcomed.

Q: That engagement was mostly on a bilateral basis with the four countries?

WALKER: Primarily bilateral, which was the way they wanted it.

Q: And that the NATO summit criteria were agreed to for future members but no dates were set.

WALKER: No dates were set.

Q: And no countries were listed. That happened later on.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Okay, anything else we should say about your time at the NSC, '93, '94.

WALKER: Those were the key issues I worked on.

Q: What happened after that?

WALKER: After that I was extraordinarily lucky to be nominated to go to be the ambassador in Prague. While hanging around hoping the Senate would confirm me, I came out here and studied Czech for a while. I went to Prague in the summer of 1995.

Q: Okay and you were what, nominated in early '95.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: And so you had already left the NSC or-

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Okay.

WALKER: Officially nominated in early '95-

Q: And then you had to wait for-

WALKER: Long procedure before you get officially nominated.

Q: Yes, and then some times there's a long procedure after you're nominated too.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Before you're confirmed.

WALKER: Yes, I was very lucky. I got in just under the wire on one of Jesse Helm's holds on all nominees. He was trying to get the department to accept his proposal. I think it was, I think this hold was to get the department to accept his proposal to put ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) and AID (Agency for International Development) in the State Department.

Q: Not yet the U.S. Information Agency.

WALKER: No, you're right. It was the U.S. Information Agency and ACDA. So nothing to do with the individuals, but luckily I had my hearings just before that.

Q: And you reached Prague, when did you say in the summer of-

WALKER: Mid-July of '95.

Q: '95. And you were there three years.

WALKER: Yes, just a smidge over three years until the beginning of October '98.

Q: Okay, you want to talk maybe to start with a little bit about some of the issues were between the United States and Czech Republic and who your DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) was and-

WALKER: I was very lucky to have two fabulous DCMs. I inherited Eric Edelman who's now our Ambassador in Turkey. After a year, I knew I couldn't have him more than two years before his tour would up, but after a year Strobe Talbot enticed him back to Washington to be his chief of staff and I got Mike Guest who has just finished being our Ambassador in Romania. So I was extremely lucky to have two really outstanding DCMs. Some issues were common with all of the Central and East European countries. Obviously we liked it if they supported us on Iran, Iraq, Libya, Cuba, et cetera. But it didn't matter critically because they're not major players in those issues. What we really cared about in all those countries was the development of democracy and a market economy. The Czech Republic was in very good shape on democracy. The basics of democracy had returned virtually over night. Free elections, free press, free speech, and there was never any problem, never any threat of backsliding. I think that's the only one of the Central or East European countries of which that was true.

What had been Czechoslovakia had been a strong democracy during the first republic, 1918-1939. It was the only democracy in Central Europe that didn't, in the broadest sense of the term Central Europe, that did not succumb to fascism. In fact there was less of a fascist movement than in France or Britain. And it had a very strong economy. In the late part of the Hapsburg empire something over about eighty percent of the industrial capacity of the entire Hapsburg-Austro-Hungarian empire was in what is now the Czech Republic. So there was a strong tradition of that, but on the democratic side, there was a strong belief among most Czechs that democracy meant you voted every four years and left things to governments in between, and this was understandable. For the first time in forty-five years people had a chance to build careers, make money for their families, travel, have a different kind of private life. The country was perceived not to be in trouble.

There were serious economic problems that were not obvious to the Czech man on the street. So people weren't worrying about government. They were doing their own thing. On the economic side it was clear as soon as I got there and really looked beneath the surface that the Czech economic miracle was partly a Potemkin accomplishment. Prime Minister Klaus liked to brag about the high percentage of the economy that had been privatized. But in fact the government still owned a controlling share in the big banks. The big banks owned a controlling share in the investment funds. The investment funds owned a controlling share in many companies and industries. And there was, I never saw any evidence of explicit collusion, but since the leaders of the banks and the businesses tended to be supporters of the center-right government, nobody wanted unemployment to go higher. So a lot of bad money was being thrown after good or good money being thrown after bad. Banks continuing to prop up companies instead of forcing them to restructure and become profitable or go out of business. The most important single thing that needed to be done was privatize the big banks. That began to happen just as I was leaving. So there was a lot of work still to be done on economic reform.

Also at the time everybody was praising the Czechs for having privatized so quickly and criticized the Poles for not having done so. But in fact the Poles put a legal framework in place before they privatized and in the long run they may have been better off for doing it because corruption was pervasive in the Czech economy when I was there. President Klaus and his center-right government, who had done some very good things in the early days, had become the barrier to further reform. Klaus claimed to be a disciple of Margaret Thatcher and Milton Friedman. Margaret Thatcher when she was still sane would never have gone as far as he did in saying there should be no requirement for transparency in the economy, no regulation to protect a private investor from being taken advantage of. We worked very hard on those issues. I probably spent more time on the broad issue of corruption in the economy than any other single issue. Helping the Czechs prepare for joining NATO was critically important, but it didn't take a lot of my time. The defense department, I'll come to what they were doing, which was really very important, other parts of the embassy. But as soon as I arrived there I told the American Chamber of Commerce that I would never suggest that the Czechs buy American or take an American investment bid to please Washington. I thought it would be counterproductive. But if there were any suggestion that a non-American competitor was using bribery, to be blunt about it, the Embassy was absolutely there to work with them, and we never did anything unless the American company in question wanted us to. It almost always was a problem of corruption, and the American company almost always, not always but almost always, wanted us involved. I learned so much. I'd never been in the private sector. But working with the American companies on specific issues was a fantastic education for me. And it was fun and gratifying. Our success record was not a hundred percent in keeping competitions honest but it was in the high nineties I think, and that was versometimes it was very easy. All we'd have to do was let the relevant Czech minister or municipality or whatever know that the American Embassy was paying attention, and at the time they had the United States on this unrealistic pedestal. They really cared what we thought. So just knowing we were paying attention was sometimes was enough to do the trick. Other times it was a lot harder and we would have to threaten to go public.

There were always important Czechs we could work with, and we would never have been successful without them. But there were people in Czech political party positions or government positions or the governor of the National Bank who was a key ally of mine. It wasn't always just individual company issues. One time the Governor of the National Bank whom I liked enormously phoned me deeply worried. He was quite certain that organized crime was buying controlling shares of some mid-sized Czech banks. He knew he didn't have the investigative tools or the regulatory tools to do anything about it. He wanted our help. He said, "Don't leave any messages for me about this not even with my secretary. I don't know who I can trust." But I went to the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) who sent over some Czech speaking FBI agents. Some of the Czech American agents in Texas had been very involved in investigating failed savings and loans in the United States and had experience in this kind of thing. They made several trips and I can talk about it now because the circle of those they were working with expanded. Finally they were briefing parliamentary committees and the Governor of the National Bank talked publicly about it. They worked on this particular issue, but they were training Czech security people and bank regulatory people and finally parliamentary committees by working with them on the concrete issue. So there were always important Czechs we could work with.

Q: You mentioned the Chamber of Commerce. Were those mostly American representatives or a lot Czech?

WALKER: Almost all and many of the same companies now have Czech leaders. There were some Czech leaders already when I was there. But the American companies went into the Czech Republic and elsewhere with their own top people but with the intent to bring in natives as soon as possible.

Q: On the, come back to the political side again. One person you haven't mentioned yet I don't think is Havel. And I wonder to what extent was the Czech experience during the Communist period also a contributing factor to the maybe easier transition to democracy than maybe some other countries. I'm thinking of '68, the Prague Spring, some other things that where Communism in Czechoslovakia seemed somewhat different than elsewhere.

WALKER: Yes. It's hard to say because after '68 Czechoslovakia had the most repressive Soviet domination of all of the three North Central Europeans. They didn't have goulash communism as Hungary had. They didn't have Solidarity as the Poles had. The Czechs are quite passive. Thirty-eight, '48, '68, by 1968 the Poles or Hungarians would have put their bodies in front of the Soviet tanks and would've been crushed. The Czechs haven't done that since 1620. It's hard for American to understand how history looms. Since the last time the locals rose up against Hapsburg domination and were executed or exiled, the Czechs haven't really stuck their necks out. They didn't go on the streets in November of 1989 until the jig was up for Communism. But the memory of democracy seemed to be somehow in the bones. The basics of democracy, the broad aspects as I say returned virtually overnight. It always frustrated me that the Czechs weren't angrier that they were being ripped off by crooked businessmen with the connivance of the government. And some government leaders were certainly on the take and were feathering their own nest because of the corrupt economic system. But the Czechs don't tend to get as outraged as I think they ought to.

On the political system as you know there are some things every ambassador needs to do. There's also a lot of range for any ambassador to choose things he or she also wants to do. And because the basics of democracy were so firm I spent a lot of time on what President Havel called civil society. Working with Czech NGOs, encouraging them to use my house. It's I'm told one of the three or four most grandiose, ostentatious ambassadorial residences we have. If they have a party at my house, they can get potential donors to come and they'd also get publicity points. So they used the house, and I went to all their events and that kind of thing. I also encouraged any American or Czech company that was doing anything philanthropic to use the house to kick it off or have a party celebrating it. I spent a lot of time with Czech non-profits, a lot of what might have been my private time and never regretted it. That was just enormous fun. I really enjoyed doing it. That's something President Havel of course was very involved in.

Q: And the government certainly knew what you were doing and was quite comfortable with it and probably appreciated it.

WALKER: Different government members felt differently about it. Prime Minister Klaus didn't really want any other centers of authority. He didn't see any point in civic organizations or regional governments for that matter. His wife was very outspoken on the issue of the Roma, the gypsies, a human rights issue in the Czech Republic. It wasn't a social or political issue because they're too small and too disorganized to roil the waters, but it was a serious human rights issue. She was very active in that and there were others in Klaus's government and out who were very active in helping civil society and would come to the parties at my house and that kind of thing. So there was a mixed feeling in governmental circles, but certainly there was no secret about what I was doing.

Q: At the time you were there Klaus was the--

WALKER: Prime minister.

Q: Prime minister and Havel was the president.

WALKER: President. And Havel found it very, very frustrating that the Czech constitution, like almost all parliamentary democracies, gives the president, the head of state, so little power. When he spoke as the conscience of the country, he did a wonderful job for the Czech Republic and the whole region. But too often he would publicly say what the defense budget ought to be, who ought to have which ministerial post et cetera, and that was none of his business. His reputation among Czechs by the end of his tenure as president was not as high as his reputation in the outside world because he'd become too overtly partisan. Klaus fell, the Klaus government fell about midway through my time there. It became clear about midway through my time there that the Czechs had serious economic problems that they were papering over with an artificially low unemployment rate. Exports weren't growing. The only companies that were having a growth in exports were the ones owned by foreigners like Americans. Wonderful Czech workers, but they needed Americans or West Europeans to come and restructure the company, bring more advanced financial techniques, equipment of course, obviously technology. So Klaus tried just to change some personalities in the government, and that didn't work. So at any rate finally he was overthrown by members of his own government.

Q: Overthrown-

WALKER: As prime minister.

Q: Lost confidence in the parliament.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Okay.

WALKER: There was a move not from the opposition but from reformers in his own government. The good guys on the center right. So for six months while they prepared for early elections which they've never had to have before, the Governor of the Central Bank took a leave of absence and became prime minister and a government of experts, which was primarily people from, the good people from Klaus' government. Serious reformers from Klaus' government. And then there was an election and the Social Democrats took power, not long before I left the country.

Q: And the governor of the national bank, central bank was the one that you had worked very closely with.

WALKER: Very closely with, and his interim government in six months did more for serious economic reform than the Klaus government had done in the previous two years. The governor knew that he couldn't move things all the way, but he, as he told me when he took the prime minister's job, he wanted to push things as far as he could, making it harder for whoever took office to backslide including bank privatization.

Q: Okay, let's stop for a second.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE ASTART OF TAPE 2, SIDE B

WALKER: The embassy, of course, was very involved in a lot of things. Those were the major issues that took up my time. The embassy was involved in helping the Czechs prepare for NATO obviously. One of the great things, and I think this was true of all the transition countries, the United States was on such a pedestal at the time. They really wanted us to interfere in their internal affairs, to give advice on their domestic, political and economic reforms. They didn't always take our advice, which is fine. It's their country. But they seriously listened to it, and every member of the embassy, not just the ambassador, could see a concrete difference he had made, and as you know in Washington you fight fiercely on policy issues, and sometimes the president himself checks your option box. But that doesn't guarantee that's going to make any difference in the real world. I think every member of the embassy staff could see a concrete difference he had made. The Defense Attachï¿½ was obviously working with the Czechs, organizing various training programs to help them learn how to work with NATO and eventually be a NATO member. But he was also working with the defense department. How the hell do you prepare a defense budget and present it to parliament? He and the political section and the press section would work with the relevant parliamentary committees, here are the questions you ought to ask about what the defense department tells you about its budget. The Czechs had had to get rid of their whole security service of course. They were very worried about organized crime, drug running, weapons trade. They knew they couldn't protect their borders, and they needed help. So our security people would work with the brand new and inexperienced Czech security service on specific cases, sort of teaching by running cases together on working with those issues. The Press Attachï¿½ constantly working with members of the Czech press which when I arrived was so deferential. They'd do an interview with me and then send me a transcript for me to correct before they'd print it, and we would say no-

Q: That's like this interview.

WALKER: No, you shouldn't do that. Warren Christopher came to town, and I said to him as we were driving in from the airport. You'll be offered transcripts of press conference - what the press is going to-not transcripts but be offered articles in draft of what the press says about you. And bless his heart, he said, "Why I hope they would know they mustn't do that." So in a lot of little ways as well as organizing training programs and things. The Czech press became more assertive during the time I was there. This was not just because of our efforts, but I hope we contributed to it. They got the idea that they should be investigative journalists. They weren't very good at it. They were rather naive about it, but they got the idea that they shouldn't just print whatever senior government officials or the American ambassador told them. They should think for themselves about it. So all of these things were really very gratifying.

Q: Did you find that your Czech language was good enough to conduct business in the language, but did you need a lot of, need some help at first?

WALKER: It was never as good as I wanted it to be. Virtually all the Czechs I, all the Czechs in Prague, the government people and opposition politicians with whom I dealt spoke much better English than I spoke Czech. There was one defense minister, there were three defense ministers in my time. One of them spoke no foreign language and if I was sitting next to him at lunch or dinner, obviously we would be talking substance, and we'd do it in Czech and I could manage it. But if there were a serious problem, I'd take an interpreter to his office in case I needed him. President Havel speaks excellent English. He chooses to deal in Czech, which is appropriate. It's his country. But he could speak Czech and I could speak English, and we didn't need an interpreter. When my Czech really came in handy was in smaller towns and cities talking to a mayor or the editor of a newspaper or chamber of commerce. I could manage in Czech, but it was hard for me, and I'm sure painful for the listening Czech to hear me mangle his language. I could manage if I had to, but it was never good as it should've been.

Q: You were able to do quite a bit of travel around the Czech Republic.

WALKER: Yes, it's a small country.

Q: You could always get back to Prague for the night.

WALKER: Yes, I didn't always but I always could. Whenever there was a whole day, when I did not need to do something at my desk in Prague, I would be some place around the country, sometimes just for fun, taking the smallest embassy car on the weekends and going. It's a beautiful country, wonderful things to see. But often visiting municipalities, and whenever I traveled around the country, I would invite the local Peace Corps volunteers, the Peace Corps volunteers from that region, for lunch, dinner or breakfast. They obviously did not work for me. They were not part of the embassy. Sometimes it was the closest thing to a good meal they got. They live on really starvation wages. And when I mentioned this to the Peace Corps director who passed through town, he said, "But they shouldn't be reporting to you." They weren't reporting to me. They were telling me their funny stories. I had gone, even before I presented my credentials, I had gone down to the town in which the last of our Peace Corps groups in the Czech Republic was doing its language training, had a wonderful day with them, just terrific group of, not always young people. Young people, older retired people, some mid-career people who were taking two or three years off to do this. And then I swore this group in at the residence in Prague, so I felt particular relationship with these Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: Of that group.

WALKER: With this group. And they would tell me their funny stories. I learned so much about the Czech Republic because they live in a different country. I was carried around on a silken pillow in Prague living in this palace, being treated with incredible deference, which was sometimes a problem breaking through the deference. They were living I think it was on sixty, I think it was the equivalent of sixty dollars a month for room, board, et cetera. They were working in some of the rust belt parts of the country, working on environmental issues, on small businesses and teaching English as a foreign language. So they were seeing a different country than I saw, and just hearing them talk about what life was like was such an education for me. So I traveled around the country as much as I could.

Q: Roughly how many Peace Corps volunteers were in the Czech Republic at that time, a hundred or so or less?

WALKER: I would guess about a hundred. Not more than that.

Q: And they'd come at different times-

WALKER: No, no. This was the last batch.

Q: Oh I see.

WALKER: And they were there only my first two years because the Czech Republic was very proud of being the first former Communist country to be graduated out of our economic assistance program when their per capita GNP became too high for bilateral economic assistance. That includes the Peace Corps.

Q: I'm a great lover and believer in the Peace Corps from my experience particularly in Ghana.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Which is the very first country to receive the Peace Corps in 1961.

WALKER: And that's what I thought the Peace Corps was all about in some terribly poverty stricken third world country.

Q: Well, I know they were in East Central and Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union, but I don't remember that some times.

WALKER: Oh they were doing just a wonderful job.

Q: I suspect they appreciated your interest and the attitude that you took in going around to see some of their sites and their activities.

WALKER: They seemed to. It was fun for me, but it was also seriously educational. I don't think it was just goofing off to go see them as often as possible.

Q: You mentioned that the secretary of state came while you were there. The president had been there after the NATO summit in early-

WALKER: Yes. I was on his traveling party, January '94.

Q: '94. So you went there but you weren't ambassador.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: At that time.

WALKER: No.

Q: He didn't come back again while you were there.

WALKER: He did not. Hilary Clinton came for four days. That's a long visit, a real strain on a small embassy. Prague was the flavor of the month in those years, and one reason I didn't feel any need to come back to Washington was that everybody came to Prague. Chris invited all the Central and East European foreign ministers to meet him in Prague. Thirteen foreign ministers around my lunch table. I was a nervous wreck, but it went very well. The first meeting I had with the Czech foreign minister to talk about this Christopher trip, he said, "We're thrilled he's chosen Prague. Isn't it wonderful? We're so glad he's coming here, and when he leaves, you and I will be the happiest people in town." You had trips like this. So you know what it's like for a small embassy. But he came. The first September I was there, I had just presented my credentials on the 31st of August because all the Czechs were on vacation over the summer when I arrived, we had the secretary of defense one week, the chairman-no, first we had the chairman, no first we had the secretary of defense. The next week we had the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. The next week we had the secretary of the air force. The Czechs loved having all three of them. But frankly it was the same discussion, the same topics with the same Czech officials in the same offices three consecutive weeks. I'm not sure that was the best use of the Czech officials' time. Madeleine Albright came with Hilary Clinton. Madeleine was still our Ambassador to the UN. She came back as Secretary of State and then she came with two of her daughters and their husbands and her sister for a week's holiday while I was there. But we had Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of the Environment, various senior people from the Defense and State Departments and from Treasury. Just a non-stop flow of very senior visitors.

Q: Did you have to track down some of Secretary Albright's relatives that were still in the Czech Republic?

WALKER: I didn't do that personally. When the story broke about her Jewish heritage she called me and said, she's an old friend, and said she wanted to send her brother and sister in law and her sister over to see what they can find out. And she had already put them in touch-I don't know on whose excellent recommendation-with Thomas Kraus the executive director of the Czech Jewish Association, fabulous man. He did a lot of the tracking down and accompanied Madeleine's relatives on visits to not just relatives but people who had known their parents. Her brother John found the ninety year old man who'd held them in his arms when John was six months old and christened as a Roman Catholic. John and his wife came back the next summer with their two teenage sons to visit some of the same people. He wanted his sons to hear these stories before the people died. When they were there the initial time tracking down relatives and friends, they'd come back to the residence at night just worn out because so many of the stories they'd heard were tragic. But also so pleased with how much they were learning about their family, which is why John wanted to bring his teenage sons back to learn this. So I was happy to be a bystander and a B and B for them. But it was Thomas Kraus who did it. Thomas told me that he was spending about a third of his time with mostly Czech Americans but sometimes Czech Canadians or Brits or what have you who had just discovered they had Jewish roots and wanted to learn more about their families.

Q: You mentioned a couple of times it was a small embassy, and I'm sure it was. But it obviously was doing a lot of things. Did you feel like it was too small?

WALKER: For some things, yes. We had about a hundred Americans and about a hundred Czechs, that includes switchboard operators, drivers, carpenters, everybody. We probably had a larger visitor load than any of the other similar sized embassies in that part of the world because everybody wanted to go to Prague. Obviously when senior Americans were traveling through the region, they'd have to spend the weekend somewhere and not being fools, they'd choose to spend the weekend in Prague. So, yes, this was a burden, not so much on me. It was a wonderful opportunity for me because it was, instead of just Czechs talking to the same old people at my dinner table, there would be an interesting visitor from Washington, and I'd exploit the visitors, including from the private sector. We also had a lot of private sector visitors, business people, cultural people, and I'd get, I had a wonderful dining room that would seat thirty-four, and the acoustics were such that everybody could be part of the same conversation. So we would have the visitor lead a general conversation about economic reform, the banking world, press freedom, whether it was true that the level and quality of culture was declining under commercialism et cetera as well as government issues. So for me it was an opportunity. For the embassy, the people who had to do the logistics of the trips it could be a real burden.

Q: You had a number of CODELs, senators, congressmen.

WALKER: Did we ever have a number of them. And one CODEL we did not have, this is something I must brag about. It was going to be a CODEL from the House of Representatives coming to Prague over Easter weekend. They didn't want any appointments except with the President and the Prime Minister. It had to be Easter weekend. They obviously wanted somebody from the Embassy to accompany those visits, and they also wanted an Embassy officer to accompany the wives on sight seeing and shopping. I never deliberately leaked anything, but we sent an unclassified cable with the longest distribution list we could think of saying we'd do our best on the official meetings although Czechs didn't work weekends, but we'd do our best.

Q: Especially Easter.

WALKER: Obviously the Ambassador would accompany them on any official meetings they had. We would not provide an Embassy officer for the wives to do shopping and sight seeing, but if they would provide a cite designation, the numbers for their expense account-

Q: Oh, cite, C-I-T-E.

WALKER: Yes, cite.

Q: Fiscal data.

WALKER: Fiscal citation, their fiscal data, we'd be happy to hire a minibus and a Czech speaking guide at their expense. About noon one day in the office, minding my own business, I got a phone call. It was Walt Slocum at his breakfast table at home in Washington saying, "I hope I'm the first to congratulate you. That entire cable is in the Washington Post." The visit was canceled.

Where we could've used more people: when Czechoslovakia split apart, the State Department in its wisdom staffed the Slovak embassy with the numbers that had been allotted to Czechoslovakia. We'd had a consulate of course in Slovakia. So we were now trying to do two embassies with the numbers that had been allotted to Czechoslovakia at a time when the political and economic system had burst open. We had fewer than half, Poland's a bigger country. Of course it was right that Poland had more political and economic officers. Hungary is virtually the same population, about ten million people and very close in its situation in its political and economic evolution. The political and economic offices in Hungary were more than twice the number in Prague. So we could've used another pol-and we did finally get another political officer just as I was leaving.

Q: The population of the Czech Republic-

WALKER: And Hungary.

Q: Was about ten million at the time.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Do you want to say something about the region in terms of your involvement in the period you were there? Did you get much involved in issues between Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic? Dayton happened while you were, not too long after you got there in terms of Bosnia were you and the embassy in Prague involved in these things much?

WALKER: No, no. Very, very little. Occasional things would happen. When we needed to send the very first American troops to Bosnia, it was a matter of getting equipment to them by rail. We wanted, of course, we asked the Czechs at the last minute. Tell us in the next thirty minutes we have permission to do this. The Czech constitution says the parliament has to approve any deployment of military force.

Q: Through the territory.

WALKER: Yes, on its territory. There was no way the parliament could act that quickly. With the best will in the world there was no question the parliament would agree to it. There was no way it could be done in the time Washington wanted. I went to the deputy foreign minister who was a very close colleague and to the man who ran President Havel's foreign policy office, international relations office and said, "I hesitate to use the word sealed trains in this part of the world, but I promise you these people will not get off the train. Can you say that this doesn't qualify as a deployment on your territory?" And they did it. There were small things like that. But in big policy issues, no.

Q: That was true also of the relation-

WALKER: Regional issues.

Q: With the Slovaks.

WALKER: With the Slovaks. There was no need really for me to get involved. The Czech and Slovak velvet divorce was almost complete when I got there. They had done a superb job of dividing up, not just the countries, and it wasn't automatically clear because sometimes there was a town in Slovakia that could only be reached by a road in the Czech Republic or vice versa. So they'd do a bit of land swaps, but dividing up stacks of paper and typewriters and filing cabinets in embassies all over the world. That was mostly done except for a question of some gold reserves that were primarily in the Czech National Bank. Some of that was believed by some of the international Jewish communities to be Jewish gold. So the question of how much of the Jewish golSlovakia would be responsible for and how much the Czech Republic would be responsible was still an issue. There was no need for us to be engaged in negotiation between the Czechs and the Slovaks on that. Obviously we were very engaged on the issue of Jewish restitution. Stu Eisenstadt was in the country as our special envoy on that issue. We followed up on it after his departure.

Q: You had sort of normal relations with the embassy in Bratislava or-

WALKER: Not more than the embassy in Warsaw or Budapest.

Q: Budapest.

WALKER: And I had expected frankly that we'd be comparing notes more often than we did. We visited each other for the fun of it and obviously told stories over drinks and dinner. The Commerce Department sent the four ambassadors, American ambassadors from those four countries to London, Brussels and Frankfurt to talk about to American businesses in those three countries about investment and trade opportunities. For me the most rewarding part of the trip was having several days to compare notes with my colleagues from the other countries. But our situations just weren't conducive to that much cooperation.

Q: How about other ambassadors in Prague? Did you, I mean know you went to their receptions and you, but was there any one that you were particularly close to in terms of exchanging information or I know in some parts of the world a country has a particular unique position that is I don't know if that was true in Prague at all.

WALKER: I saw a lot of them. In all of the NATO candidate countries there's a NATO ambassadorial group. We met once a month and would usually have a Czech speaker, sometimes just have a business meeting. But if we had a Czech speaker, we would also have a business meeting following it. Compare notes about issues of the day. When I'd had one of my senior visitors, I knew they'd all be on the phone to me because they'd have to write their reporting telegram. So usually I would suggest that we all collect around my dining table or somebody's dining table in the middle of the afternoon, not necessarily for a meal. I would give them all a dump on what had happened in the meeting so they could do their reporting telegrams. So I saw more of them than I might have done in Western Europe because of the NATO angle and because we had so many visitors. We had better access than any of them did. So they were more eager to learn from me, not because I was me, but because I was the American ambassador, than I had to learn from them. But some of them at certain times were particularly good allies on some of the economic issues. There was a Canadian, a terrific Canadian ambassador, and on one of the economic issues I was working most intensely where there was a real problem of corruption. There was an American company buying a Czech company, but the bank doing the financing was Canadian. So I worked very closely with the Canadian ambassador on that. One of the big issues during my time there was not a Czech - American issue. It was the Czechs and the Germans trying to arrive at a declaration to put to rest the Sudeten-German issue. That was extraordinarily difficult to do. The Germans had a fabulous ambassador in town who obviously was arguing the German case but understood Czech sensitivities and never lost his sense of humor. Washington cared about this even though we were bystanders, and I talked a lot to the Czech, again the same deputy foreign minister I mentioned earlier who was the Czech negotiator on this, and to the German ambassador about it. So I got both sides of what was going on there. The French ambassador was particularly good in terms of being plugged in to Czech society and understanding what was going on, and the same, he and the same German ambassador I mentioned shared my, on a personal basis, shared my concern about corruption. For instance the OECD had adopted an agreement that all of its member countries would do what the United States long ago did and make it a criminal offense, foreign bribery a criminal offense. The German ambassador said there is no way Germany is going to do that before our next election. It's just too sensitive, but if you hear things about German companies, let me know on a private basis and I'll see what I can do. I'm not sure that was the view of his government or certainly wasn't the view of the French government at the time. But these two ambassadors were willing to work with me on it.

One quickly learned, I don't know if this is a common habit, but in Prague I would get invitations to what were called diplomatic dinner parties that meant only other diplomats. I was delighted to have that cue because I would say how sorry I was that I was already busy that evening. But I quickly learned which few ambassadors would have really interesting Czechs at their dinner tables, and so I would go to those. I would go to the Russian ambassador's and the German ambassador's because while I was treated like some kind of goddess, they had particularly difficult times because of their countries' unfortunate roles in Czech history. They were both very good guys who didn't deserve it. So I would go to their dinner parties to be supportive.

Q: Okay, anything else that we should cover in your time in Prague.

WALKER: Not that I can think of.

Q: Eventually it came to an end.

WALKER: Sadly.

Q: You left in '98.

WALKER: Yes, I left in the autumn of '98.

Q: Before the election.

WALKER: Well, just before-

Q: Before the congressional, well it was not a presidential election that year.

WALKER: Not presidential, no. I came back to Washington for President Havel's state visit in mid-September and I officially stopped being ambassador on the 3rd of October.

Q: So you returned to Prague to say your farewells after the state visit.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: And then left. Left government then or did you-

Walker: I left government then and hooked up with an American nonprofit whom I'd got to know in the Czech Republic called the World Monument's Fund. It does historic preservation all over the world and I spent two years in Europe helping out. I was pretty much a full-time volunteer. They paid my expenses but not a salary.

Q: Where were you based in Europe?

WALKER: One year in Paris and one in London but doing the same job. Not too tacky if you have to leave Prague to go to Paris and London.

Q: Sounds all right. Well, Jenonne, I've enjoyed this conversation. I think maybe we'll stop at this point and I'll have a chance to review-

WALKER: I've enjoyed it very much.

Q: What we've talked about at some future point.

WALKER: Thank you very much

End of interview